

Traditional Homegardens as a Sustainable Ecosystem for Maintenance of Biodiversity: A Case Study from Kumaun Himalaya, India

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ABSTRACT Homegardens with trees are one of the agroforestry practices known to be ecologically sustainable and diversifies livelihood of local community. The main objective of this study is to understand the home gardening systems as practiced by rural people in the region, and to provide a base for further scientific studies. The study sites were selected in *Okhalkanda* block of district Nainital in *Kumaun* Himalayan region of Uttarakhand state, India. After primary survey, ten villages involved in homegarden agroforestry were randomly selected and in each village ten households were randomly selected for the collection of data. The total number of species encountered in the homegardens was 86, with vegetables as the dominant use-component. Fodder, fuel wood, fruits, medicinal, miscellaneous, ornamental, pulses, spices and religious were the major plant use categories. As the highest biodiversity and complexity among man-made agro systems homegarden show diversity of production system and diversity of species, both of which are key aspects that determine ecological sustainability.